



Abstracts



Maria Elisa Christie - Conservation Agriculture comes from the sky, or does it? Using participatory mapping to document gendered spaces of information exchange

Authors

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Maria Elisa Christie - Virginia Tech, Daniel Sumner - Virginia Tech, Stephane Boulakia - Centre de Cooperation Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Developpement (CIRAD), Manuel Reyes (PhD) - North Carolina Agriculture and Technology State University

Body

This study applies new feminist political ecologies to explore the intersection of gender, space, and information exchange within the context of a research-for-development project promoting Conservation Agriculture (CA) in Cambodia. CA has been characterized as knowledge-intensive, yet within the study area, farmers' access to information about CA is very limited. Referring to this lack of information, one farmer said: "Conservation agriculture comes from the sky." Using a mixed methods approach including focus group discussions (FGDs), participatory mapping, and in-depth interviews with 47 smallholder farmers, we asked: 1) How and where do men and women access information about conservation agriculture? and 2) How does space influence gendered norms and practices related to information exchange? During household visits, respondents were asked to map where they receive and share information about CA and discuss those spaces and the activities that take place there. Initial FGDs showed that there are gender differences in access to information and the place where it is shared, and that women spend more time in the community and their homes while men are more in the fields. Lectures at farmers' homes and the project house were more often attended by women; field demonstrations were more often attended by men. These differences are due in part to perceptions regarding men's and women's roles in the home and community and their decision-making spheres. Access to agricultural information cannot be understood without first considering the negotiations and activities within the farming household.

Sessions

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Saturday, Apr 25 4:20 PM

